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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A verification system for a computer software installation, comprising:

a primary library file, the primary library file having a digital signature;

a loader program that obtains a digital signature key and further loads the primary library file, wherein, if a public key cannot be obtained via a virtual machine provider, the digital signature key is a hidden public key internal to the loader program and, if a public key can be obtained via the virtual machine provider, the digital signature key is the public key obtained via the virtual machine provider; and

a plurality of secondary files referenced by the primary library file, each of the plurality of secondary files having a digital signature;

wherein the loader program verifies and selectively loads the primary library file by comparing the obtained digital signature key with the digital signature of the primary library file, the primary library file subsequently verifying and selectively loading the plurality of secondary files by calling the loader program to compare the obtained digital signature key with the digital signature of each of the plurality of secondary files, wherein the computer software installation is a virtual machine installation.

2. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 1, further characterised by:

at least one tertiary file referenced by at least one secondary file of the plurality of secondary files, wherein after successful verification and selective loading of the at least one secondary file, the at least one secondary file manages the verification and selective loading of the at least one tertiary file.

3. (Canceled).

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4. (Canceled).

5. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 2, further characterised by:
at least one administrator-configurable file and
the digital signature key comprising a number of keys including a private key provided by an administrator,
wherein the loader program verifies the digital signature of the at least one administrator-configurable file using the private key.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) A verification method for a computer software installation, the method comprising the steps of:

launching a loader program arranged to load files;
if a public key is available from an internet site of a virtual machine provider, using the public key as a digital signature key;

if a public key is not available from the internet site of the virtual machine provider, using a hidden key as the digital signature key;

using the loader program to verify the authenticity of a digital signature incorporated in a primary library file by comparing said digital signature with the digital signature key;

selectively loading the primary library file in dependence upon the successful verification of its digital signature;

using the primary library file and the loader program to verify the authenticity of digital signatures incorporated in each of a plurality of secondary files by comparing them with the digital signature key; and,

selectively loading the plurality of secondary files in dependence upon the successful verification of their digital signatures, wherein the computer software installation is a virtual machine installation.

8. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 7, further characterised by:

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including at least one tertiary file referenced by at least one secondary file of the plurality of secondary files,

the method comprising the further steps of:

after successful verification and selective loading of the at least one secondary file, ÷

using the at least one secondary file to manage the verification and selective loading of the at least one tertiary file.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Canceled).

11. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 8, further characterised by:

at least one administrator-configurable file and

the digital signature key comprising a number of keys including a private key provided by an administrator,

wherein the loader program further verifies and selectively loads the digital signature of the at least one administrator-configurable file using the private key.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Original) A computer program element comprising computer program means for performing the method of claim 7.

14. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 1, further characterised by: the virtual machine provider is accessed through an internet site to provide the public key.

15. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 7, further characterised by: the virtual machine provider is accessed through an internet site to provide the public key.

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16. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 5, wherein the primary library file is a virtual machine dynamic link library file.

17. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 11, wherein the primary library file is a virtual machine dynamic link library file.

18. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 16, wherein the loader program is a third-party application that initiates the virtual machine installation.

19. (Previously Presented) The verification system of claim 16, wherein the loader program is a virtual machine launcher that initiates the virtual machine installation.

20. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 17, wherein the loader program is a third-party application that initiates the virtual machine installation.

21. (Previously Presented) The verification method of claim 17, wherein the loader program is a virtual machine launcher that initiates the virtual machine installation.

22. (Previously Presented) A system for a computer software installation, comprising:

- a virtual machine primary library file, the virtual machine primary library file having a digital signature;

- a loader program that obtains a digital signature key and further loads the virtual machine primary library file; and

- a plurality of secondary files referenced by the virtual machine primary library file, each of the plurality of secondary files having a digital signature;

- wherein the loader program verifies and selectively loads the virtual machine primary library file by comparing the obtained digital signature key with the digital signature of the virtual machine primary library file, the virtual machine primary library file subsequently verifying and selectively loading the plurality of secondary files by calling the loader program to compare the

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obtained digital signature key with the digital signature of each of the plurality of secondary files, wherein the computer software installation is a virtual machine installation.

23. (Previously Presented) A system for a computer software installation as in claim 22, wherein, if a public key cannot be obtained via a virtual machine provider over the internet, the digital signature key is a hidden public key internal to the loader program and, if a public key can be obtained via the virtual machine provider, the digital signature key is the public key obtained via the virtual machine provider over the internet.